

OVERNIGHT VILLAIN! Angry Pakistani fans burn an effigy of national cricket team captain Wasim Akram at Karachi on June 20 after the World Cup final loss to Australia. — Internet photo

Shock, sadness & spleen

KARACHI, July 21 (AFP/AP): Pakistani cricket fans furious at their team's dismal loss to Australia in the World Cup final burned an effigy of captain Wasim Akram during a protest here today, witnesses said.

In the nearby city of Hyderabad, disgruntled youths burned tyres and pelted vehicles with stones following Pakistan's eight-wicket defeat in Sunday's final at Lord's, residents said.

Some Pakistanis watching the final fainted, others burst into tears and one elderly man in the central town of Jacobabad died of shock, newspapers reported.

In the central Karachi district of Nazimabad, witnesses said two dozen mourners bore a coffin in a mock funeral procession commemorating Pakistan's World Cup demise.

Fans in this bustling port city tore up large portraits of several of the top players, residents said. Some called for an inquiry into the batting collapse which saw Pakistan all out for 132, the lowest total ever in a World Cup final.

Fans even called for the arrest of those responsible for the humiliation and an eradication of the "pollution" allegedly afflicting the national side, witnesses said.

Karachi police detained a

man for beating up his brother who last week had named his son after Wasim Akram.

Mohammad Ashraf, a 35-year-old shopkeeper, slapped, kicked and threatened to kill his brother Mohammad Akram when he refused to change his son's name after the World Cup fiasco, police said.

The boy was named Wasim Akram after Pakistan beat New Zealand by nine wickets to qualify for the final.

"My brother has gone mad. I still love Wasim Akram," a police official quoted the boy's father as saying.

Police later released Ashraf after he promised not to harm his brother.

The Pakistani skipper's home was pelted with stones, his family received death threats and his father was briefly kidnapped after Pakistan lost to arch-rivals India in Bangalore in the 1996 World Cup quarter-final.

Australia's crushing win shattered the dreams of millions of cricket-crazy fans in Pakistan who had prepared massive firework displays and street celebrations in anticipation of victory.

Tahir ul Qadri, leader of the Pakistan Awami Tehrik Islamic political party, called for a probe into the defeat and said players should be punished if

allegations of match-fixing and illegal betting were proved.

Several members of the Pakistani side are due to hear their fate soon with the imminent release of a judicial inquiry into alleged match-fixing in the past.

In his hometown of Lahore, fans burned giant colour posters of Akram. Scores of young men danced around the flaming pictures shouting "down with Wasim".

They also burned pictures of Ijaz Ahmed and condemned the entire Pakistani lineup.

In the congested Punjab provincial capital of Lahore where a maze of narrow streets wind through tea stalls, stately mosques and ancient Mogul ruins fans watched with dread as their team's batting side collapsed.

Throughout Pakistan streets were deserted as people stayed inside to watch their team. Some people bought new television sets, organised home gatherings. In poor Pakistan where most people don't own a television set, people gathered in restaurants, shops and tea stalls to watch the match.

"These players aren't heroes, they are criminals," said Humayun Ahmed, a student at Punjab University.

Ahmed watched the World Cup final on TV.

Destination unknown

LONDON, June 21: Wasim Akram may or may not return home to Pakistan with the rest of his side after their Lord's humiliation in the cricket World Cup final, reports AFP.

A triumphant return to Islamabad and a rousing reception with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had been planned. It is now likely to be replaced by a more low-key affair.

Akram, who had been desperate to emulate his mentor Imran Khan by lifting the World Cup, is unlikely to relish the flight home.

After Pakistan were knocked out of the 1996 World Cup by arch-rivals India, Akram's father was kidnapped by angry fans, his effigy was set ablaze and his house stoned.

Akram, who earlier in the tournament hinted he might hang up his boots soon, already has enough off-pitch problems without having to deal with the fans' fury.

He and several other top players are the subject of a long-running judicial inquiry into match-fixing. The report is expected to be published soon, with life bans a possibility if anybody is found guilty.

A quiet summer here may be Akram's best option.

He was replaced as English county Lancashire's overseas signing by Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan this season after declaring himself unavailable. Now, with time on his hands, he will confine himself to the anonymity of club cricket in the English Midlands.

Sunday's disaster could not have been a greater contrast to the 1992 World Cup final.

Then, Pakistan had won the trophy after beating England by 22 runs at Melbourne.

Imran held the cup aloft that day. Akram stood by his side with the man-of-the-match award after belting 33 runs off 19 balls and taking three wickets for 49.

At Lord's, he scored one six off Shane Warne but, attempting a repeat when batting out the remaining overs seemed far more important than quick runs, he was dismissed for eight after facing 20 balls.

In Australia's reply, he was hit for 41 off eight overs. He took one wicket but did not even smile.

Akram has been a tumultuous career. He first became Pakistan's captain in 1992 but was removed by a players' revolt.

He was back in charge in

1995 but stripped of the captaincy at the start of last year following the match-fixing allegations.

He announced his retirement in September, saying he wanted to clear his name, but, with the inquiry still going on, he was back in the team by October and, five months ago, he was re-instated as captain.

Odd to think that one of the world's greatest all-rounders, with more than 350 wickets in Test cricket and in one-dayers to his name, could end his days in the backwaters.

Next Saturday, Akram, his international future in the balance, will turn out for Smethwick, a village on the edge of Birmingham.

Ex-stars sore

KARACHI, June 21: Former Pakistan Test players were quick to rub salt into the wound after their team's dismal showing in the World Cup final defeat by Australia yesterday, reports Reuters.

"Unbelievable, pathetic and awful," said former off-spinner Tauseef Ahmad after Australia reached their target of 133 in just 20.1 overs.

"I felt like I was cut in half watching Pakistan bat like amateurs. They are far better than what they showed. Probably, the big match pressure took a toll on them," said former batsman Mansoor Akhtar who played on the losing side in the 1987 World Cup semifinal.

Aqib Javed, a member of Pakistan's 1992 World Cup winning side, said: "We won in 1992 because Imran (Khan) and Javed (Miandad) took all the

pressure on them. There are no players of that class now."

The match was decided on the spin of a coin. I think it was a good toss for Steve Waugh to lose and bad toss for Wasim to win, said Intikhab Alam, manager of the 1992 team.

"It was a bad decision to bat. The match was being played on a newly laid track, the weather was overcast and if the skipper says bowling is our strength then he should have been wise to give his bowlers a chance to exploit the early conditions," said Intikhab.

He joined the growing band who want the final to be played on a best-of-three basis.

"You prepare yourself for four years, then play brilliantly to qualify for the final, have one bad day and all your efforts go down the drain," he said.

Celebrations down under

SYDNEY, June 21 (Reuters/Internet): Thousands of Australians on Monday hailed their nation's triumph in the World Cup cricket final against Pakistan, and plans were announced for celebrations on the team's return.

"Swift and sweet," The Australian national newspaper blared in a frontage devoted to Australia's eight-wicket demolition of Pakistan. It accompanied a photograph of a celebrating Shane Warne, with arms raised, and Australian captain Steve Waugh.

The Australian's sports lift-out trumpeted: "You were Warned".

The newspaper said the win, Australia's second World Cup title, was "the sweetest of all for a team that needed to win seven consecutive matches to be crowned champions".

The Sydney Morning Herald

declared "Aussies storm to World Cup glory" and "We are the champions".

The Herald said Australian cricketers were truly world champions of cricket, now dominating Test and one-day cricket.

"Now they can rightfully claim to have everything covered," the newspaper said, adding the World Cup victory vindicated Australian selectors' decision to split Test and one-day teams.

Leg-spinner Warne captured four for 33 as Pakistan were dispatched for 132 in 39 of their 50 overs, the lowest total in the competition's seven finals. Australia romped home at 133 for two in 20.1 overs.

Melbourne's The Age newspaper toasted the win with the front page headline: "It's our Cup! Australia demolishes Pakistan".

"Australia is back on top of the mountain in one-day cricket for the first time in 12 years," The Age said.

It labelled the win as a major triumph for Steve Waugh, who earlier this year replaced Mark Taylor as Australia's captain.

The triumph headlined news reports around the country, while Australia's two major cities, Sydney and Melbourne, both announced plans for ticker tape parades to honour Waugh's men on their return.

Talkback radio programmes also invited listeners to come up with ideas to honour the Australian team on its return.

Thousands of Australians gathered in hotels and clubs around the country to watch the final, but the earlier-than-expected finish meant they could get a few hours sleep before Monday's normal work day.

Howard's heart with 'em

SYDNEY, June 21: A bleary-eyed Australia celebrated its cricket World Cup victory Monday as joy turned to sadness for captain Steve Waugh and twin brother Mark as their grandfather died just hours after the win, reports AFP.

Edward Waugh, 89, died at a northern New South Wales hospital just hours after the Australians, led by the Waugh twins, thrashed Pakistan in the World Cup final at Lord's.

The twins had vowed to win the Cup for their ailing "Pop", but never got the chance to share their triumph with him.

The sad news came on one of Australia's cricket's proudest days. Prime Minister John Howard said he was considering plans for a day of celebration to thank the Australian team, which is due back on Wednesday.

A holiday to mark the World Cup win would give fans a chance to catch up on the sleep lost in recent weeks.

Broadcasts from England have gone well into the early morning hours in Australia all through the World Cup and the sight of droopy-lidded cricket fans has become common throughout the tournament.

"I haven't had a lot of sleep the last week or 10 days but it's all been in a tremendous cause and last night was just terrific and a very resounding victory," Howard said in a radio interview Monday.

Added evidence of Australia's collective sleep deprivation came as the Nine Network said preliminary ratings showed some 4.5 million people — more than a fourth of the population

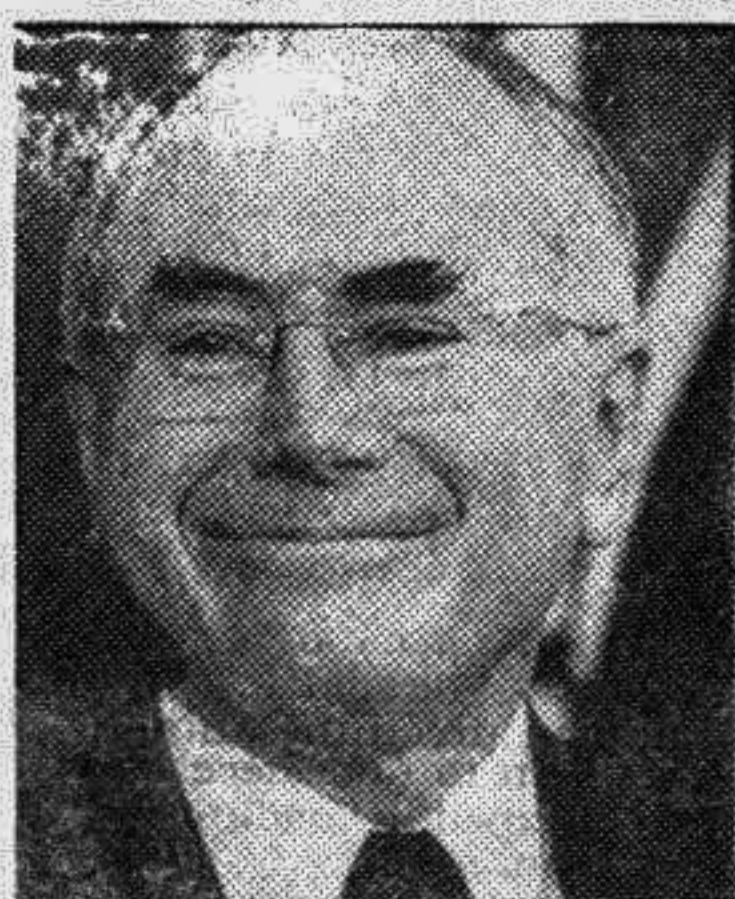
— stayed up to watch the win over Pakistan.

That put the World Cup final on par with the Olympic Games and the Australian Football League's Grand Final, the network said.

Howard last week dismissed suggestions of a national day off to give fans a chance to recover from watching the final.

But he said Monday he was considering a national day of celebration that might allow cricket fans to catch up on sleep.

"I always knew Australians



JOHN HOWARD

would turn up at work (Monday) but I always knew they'd be a bit more tired and I think everybody understands that," the prime minister said.

"It's all been in a tremendous cause and there's such a feeling of benevolence and goodwill and gratitude towards the team. I think that will do wonders for productivity."

Howard said later that he and opposition leader, Kim Beazley had agreed to honour Steve Waugh and his men with a parliamentary reception.

However, where the first frontpiece of Australia's celebration will occur immediately became an issue as the country's two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, announced rival plans.

Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett offered to host a state reception in Melbourne for Australia's victorious team on its return home.

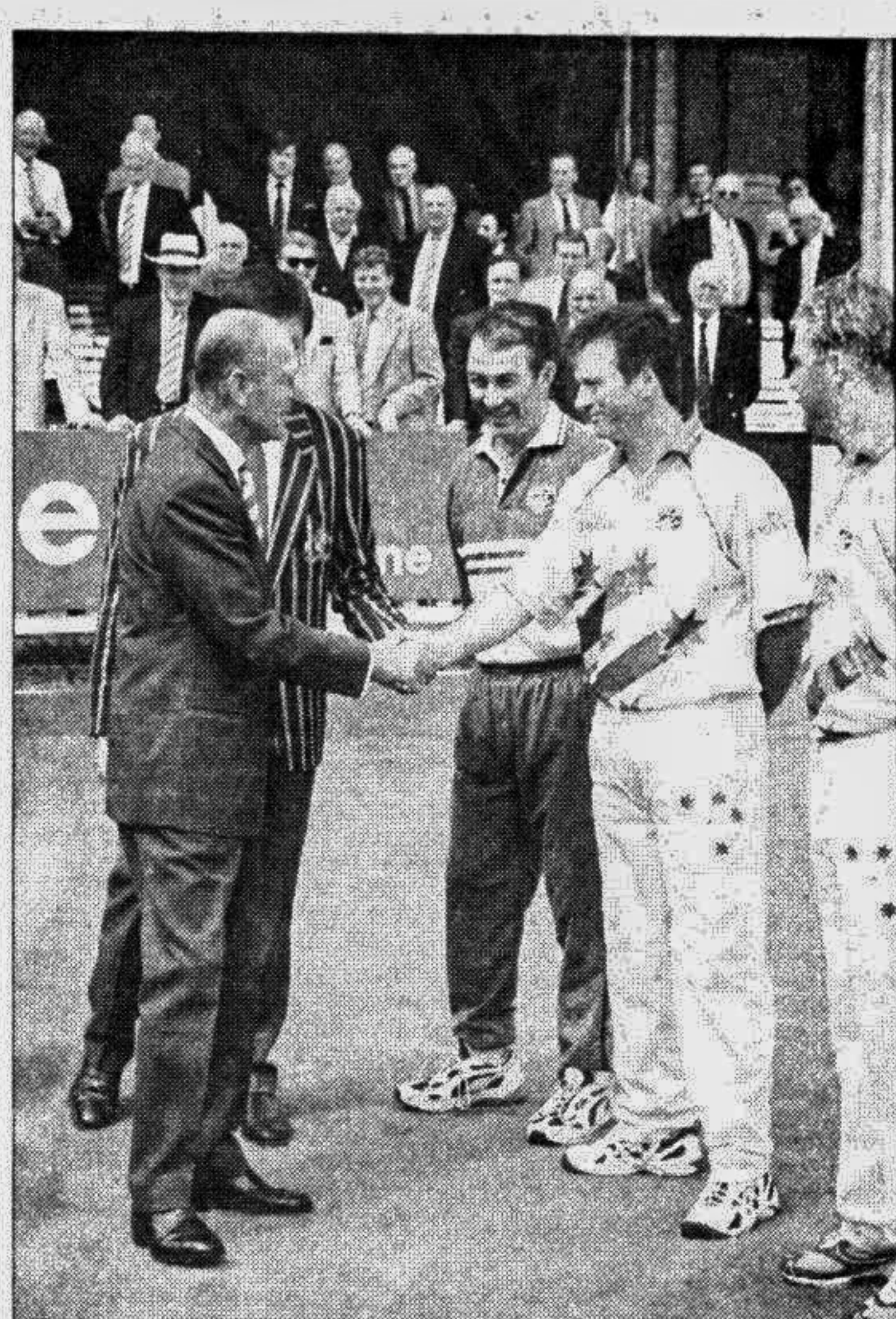
But Sydney Lord Mayor Frank Sartor has offered his city for a ticker tape parade.

Pakistanis living in Australia meanwhile sought to soften the blow of the embarrassing loss, amid reports Pakistan captain Wasim Akram was considering a delayed return home because of fears for his life.

Losing a preliminary World Cup match to India was more humiliating for Pakistan than the defeat in the final and Australian Pakistanis had lost little sleep, one community spokesman opined.

Pakistan Australia Cultural Association of Queensland secretary Sohail Khawaja said many Australian Pakistanis simply went to bed after the first innings because the outcome was obvious.

"We are pretty happy they (Pakistan) made it to the final. We are disappointed, but not devastated," Khawaja said. "It would have been a bigger shock if it had been a closely-fought match. Last night was almost one-sided."



Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, being introduced to Australian captain Steve Waugh before the World Cup final against Pakistan at Lord's on June 20. — AFP photo

Waugh's in mourning

SYDNEY, June 21: Captain Steve Waugh was in mourning Monday when their beloved grandfather died, reports AFP.

Edward, 89, died within hours of Australia winning cricket's biggest prize.

News of his passing in a northern New South Wales hospital reached his son Rodger, father of the twins, at 7 a.m. in Sydney (2100 GMT Sunday).

Steve and Mark Waugh had vowed to win the Cup for their ailing "Pop", but never got the chance to share their triumph with him.

Steve's wife Lynette broke the news to them in London by telephone, Rodger said.

"I've just heard from the boys and they're very upset," Rodger Waugh told reporters.

"They were pretty close to their Pop. He's been sick for two or three weeks but he was not in a lot of pain, and they were very thankful for that."

"It has mucked their plans up. It has put a damper on ev-

erything." When Mark Waugh scored a century against Zimbabwe in an earlier round match he dedicated it to his grandfather, who "hasn't missed a ball in the boy's first class cricketing career over the past 12 or 13 years."

Rodger, a newsagent, said on Sunday both Mark and Steve had been on the phone Saturday asking how "Pop" was.

"I told them to both keep their minds on the game and not to worry too much about Edward," he said.

Mark's middle name, Edward, was given in honour of grandfather.

The twins are due home from England with the Australian team on Wednesday.

Though both Sydney and Melbourne have offered to arrange tickertape parades for the World Cup victors, the celebrations are sure to be far from their minds.

Edward's funeral service is scheduled for Thursday.

Decisive moment

LONDON, June 21 (AP): Skipper Steve Waugh went back to a defeat in search of the defining moment of Australia's World Cup victory.

After his side had thrashed Pakistan in the most one-sided final is seven tournaments at Lord's on Sunday, Waugh believed that his team's fightback performance in a 10-run loss to the same Pakistan team exactly a month before was the turning point.

Since losing that May 23 game at Headingley, the Australians have relentlessly moved towards the kill and Waugh, who became a dual Cup winner along with veteran Tom Moody, put his finger on a gallant 91-run stand between his twin brother, Mark, and Ricky

Ponting in the Headingley defeat.

"Ricky and Mark made it to one for 90 and really went at Pakistan when they were coming at us full tilt, bowling quick, on a wicket that suited their bowlers," Waugh recalled.

"If we had been bowled out for a cheap score there we would not have progressed further on, and we ended up getting 265."

"For me that was the time where we stood up there and said: 'We've had enough here, let's give it a real red hot go'. That partnership was crucial."

One month later, in a massive anticlimax finish to the Carnival of Cricket, Australia, the winners in '87, thrashed '92 champions Pakistan with embarrassing ease in the final.

Waugh's team bowled Pakistan out for 132 in only 39 overs and reached 133 for two in 20.1. That meant almost half the scheduled 100-overs were left and the game finished 2 1/2 hours early despite a 30-minute pre-match delay by rain.

The battered scarred Australians, fresh from two nerve-wrecking encounters against South Africa, bowled, fielded and batted the temperamental Pakistani outfit 1000 spectators who had anticipated a compelling close-fought clash.

The victory completed a fairy-tale tournament for Waugh although his elation was followed several hours later by the news that his grandfather, Edward, had died in hospital at

See page 14



DAY OF THE KANGAROOS: Australian fans hold aloft inflatable kangaroos while celebrating their team's World Cup triumph at Lord's on Sunday. — AFP photo

Don't go Warnie

LONDON, June 21: Australian leg spinner Shane Warne dominated the British sporting headlines here on Monday, all newspapers praising him and some pleading for him not to quit the game, reports AFP.

Warne's four wickets for 33 against Pakistan in front of 30,000 fans at Lord's helped turn the final into a one-sided affair.

The 29-year-old bowler, cricket's most famous player at just back from major shoulder surgery last year, later said he would be considering his future in the weeks to come.

"I will take a few weeks off with my family and then decide what to do," the 29-year-old said after earning the man-of-the-match award for taking four for 33.

Asked if he might call it a day, he said: "I have spoken to a few people about my future. I am not sure what I will do."

"Today, I am very proud of what we have achieved. Deep down it is a matter of great satisfaction that I helped Australia win."

Warne, who struggled back to his best form during the tournament after being sidelined for six months last year following the surgery, had suggested at the start of the year that he was considering ending his career.

His warning, however, had been seen as an emotional over-reaction after he was dropped from the Test side for the first time in seven years.

Warne, written off as a has-been earlier in the event, took 20 wickets in the tournament, sharing the top spot with New Zealander Geoff Allott. He was named man of the match in both the semi-final and final. He has taken 317 Test wickets and passed 200 one-day wickets on Sunday.

Australian captain Steve Waugh said: "It's a personal decision Shane has to make. As a player and captain, I would like him to continue because he is a great bowler."

"But in the end the decision rests on him. Mark Taylor made his own decision to retire, similarly Warne has to make his."

Meanwhile the press was showering ulogy in the honour of the greatest leg-spinner in

the history of the game and urging him to go on playing. "Shane's World," the Daily Mirror said, adding: "Warne wins Cup then threatens to retire."

The Express' front page was dominated by the royal wedding. The back page, however, featured an appeal to Warne to reconsider any thoughts of quitting the game, under the headline: "Don't go, Shane."

The Times' front-page headline, next to a picture of the Sunday's man of the match, declared: "Whirling Warne spins Australia into record books."

The front of its sports section, again featuring Warne's smiling face, said: "Warne puts the world in Australia's hands."

The Independent, meanwhile, lamented Pakistan's capitulation as they scored the lowest total in the final — 132 — since the competition began in 1975, calling the 42 game of the five-week tournament "a virtual non-event."

But it added that Pakistan's "lack of fight" was not a total surprise, set against the background of a judicial inquiry into some of the team's players for alleged match-fixing over the past few seasons.

Perhaps it is as well that Pakistan did not return home heroes," the daily added, arguing victory for Wasim Akram's side could have led to the report being suppressed.

It added that the future of several players could be decided "before the week is out."

World Cup hero Warne considers quitting

Greenidge receives cheque

LONDON, June 21: Coach of the Bangladesh cricket team Gordon Greenidge has received the prize money pledged by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina following the team's victories over Pakistan and Scotland in the World Cup, reports BSS.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader handed over the cheque to Greenidge at the Royal Garden Hotel yesterday.